

**SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS
OFFICE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION**

**Kadoka School District
Continuous Improvement Monitoring Process Report 2002-2003**

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This report contains the results of the steering committee's self-assessment and the validation of the self-assessment by the Office of Special Education. The report addresses six principles – General Supervision, Free Appropriate Public Education, Appropriate Evaluation, Procedural Safeguards, Individualized Education Program and Least Restrictive Environment. Each principle is rated based on the following scale:

Promising Practice	The district/agency exceeds this requirement through the implementation of innovative, high-quality programming and instructional practices.
Meets Requirements	The district/agency consistently meets this requirement.
Needs Improvement	The district/agency has met this requirement but has identified areas of weakness that left unaddressed may result in non-compliance.
Out of Compliance	The district/agency consistently does not meet this requirement.
Not applicable	In a small number of cases, the standard may not be applicable for your district/agency. If an item is not applicable, the steering committee should briefly explain why the item is NA. Example – no private schools within the district boundaries.

Principle 1 – General Supervision
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General supervision means the school district's administrative responsibilities to ensure federal and state regulations are implemented and a free appropriate public education is provided for each eligible child with a disability. The specific areas addressed in principle one are child find, referral procedures, children voluntarily enrolled by parents in private schools, students placed by the school district, improving results through performance goals and indicators (assessment, drop out, graduation), professional development, suspension and expulsion rates.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- Comprehensive plan
- Published child find screening information
- Private school information
- Student file reviews
- Personnel information

- Student enrollment information
- TAT meeting data
- Student referral data
- Parent, teacher, and administrator surveys
- Budget information
- Child count
- Disabling condition and placement alternatives data
- School exempt forms
- SAT 9 participation rates
- Exit data
- Comprehensive needs assessment
- Student goals and objectives
- Suspension and expulsion data
- Discipline matrix
- Three Rivers training records

Meets requirements

The steering committee concluded that the district meets requirements in the following areas. The school district conducts child find by advertising in two local newspapers for preschool and kindergarten. The preschool teacher notifies parents who did not attend the child find screening to set up appointments with them to insure parents are aware of the school district's responsibilities in child find. The school district works closely with Three Rivers Birth to Three and the Early Homestart Program. The school district has a specified place for keeping files of students who were referred but were not tested or did not qualify for special education. The referral forms can be found within the student files and verify the parent gave consent for testing. Parents signed exemption forms indicating that parents are choosing to place their children in a non-accredited parochial school. The district has policies and procedures in place through the comprehensive plan for placing students out of district. The school district has a 0% dropout rate and employs a guidance counselor who is responsible for insuring state and district-wide assessments are being conducted accurately to disabled and not-disabled students. The school district has certified staff employed to work with and educate students with disabilities.

Needs improvement

The steering committee concluded that the district needs improvement in the following areas. The school district needs to work with community personnel to meet a wider range of students for child find. The school district should hold two screenings per year to help identify children for preschool and Kindergarten. The child find screenings should be documented and maintained in a records file. The school district needs to involve more agencies in the child find system to make it work for all children in the Kadoka School District. The general education staff needs more instruction on the referral process, the referral form, and how to help students who are having difficulty in the regular classroom by using some of the interventions on the referral form. The school district needs to improve parent education of students who are having difficulties in school. The school district needs to have a written agreement with the parochial school on how to refer students with disabilities. The school district has a discipline matrix that is used for disabled and not-disabled students. This matrix comes with the handbook and students and parents are to bring a slip back signed saying they have reviewed the matrix. The school district needs to insure all student who are exempt from taking the state and district-wide assessments are being assessed using the STAARS and the results are reported to the state accurately. The school district needs to train personnel to work with and identify students who use English as a second language. The school district needs to involve parents in attending workshops, seminars, and training so they may become stakeholders in the school's special education program and their child's education.

Out of compliance

One child reported on the December 3, 2001, child count did not have an IEP in effect on that date.

Validation Results

Promising practice

The Kadoka School District utilizes an effective pre-referral system which assists classroom teachers in working with students exhibiting difficulties, while also addressing the potential need for special education. The Teacher Assistance Team, or TAT team within the district, meets on a regular basis for each student referred for possible interventions. A running record is then kept on each of the student's interventions and the results of the interventions. If the student is later referred for evaluation, the running record of interventions could then be viewed by the evaluation team to make assessment choices.

The review team would also like to commend the district in their initial efforts to track academic progress for students with disabilities. The team noted that the compilation of self-assessment data for the district included state-wide assessment (SAT-9) data for each student with disabilities. This baseline data was assembled in order to track progress towards the state academic standards for all students with disabilities.

Meets requirements

The review team agrees with all areas that were identified by the steering committee as meeting requirements in general supervision, with the addition of child find procedures and staff training on referral procedures. The steering committee concluded that the district needs improvement with their child find activities. The committee concluded that the school district needs to involve more agencies in the child find system to make it work for all children in the Kadoka School District. The school district would also like to hold two screenings per year to help identify children for preschool and Kindergarten, as well as better document all screenings and maintain them in a records file. The review team found that the child find activities used currently by the district meet minimum requirements, however the district always has the option to further augment their current child find procedures.

The steering committee concluded that the general education staff needs more instruction on the referral process, the referral form, and how to help students who are having difficulty in the regular classroom by using some of the interventions on the referral form. During interview, the review team could not validate this area as needing improvement. All staff interviewed indicated a sufficient level of knowledge and comfort with the referral process, therefore this is an area that meets requirements for the district. However, the district may implement improvement planning in the area as appropriate.

Needs improvement

The review team agrees with all other areas that were identified by the steering committee as needing improvement in general supervision.

Out of compliance

24:05:17:03. Annual report of children served.

An IEP in effect as of the December 3, 2001, child count was not found for one (1) student. The district will not receive the federal flow through funds for this student.

Principle 2 – Free Appropriate Public Education

All eligible children with disabilities are entitled to a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment. The specific areas addressed in principle two are the provision of FAPE to

children residing in group homes, foster homes, or institutions, making FAPE available when a child reaches his/her 3rd birthday and providing FAPE to eligible children with disabilities who have been suspended or expelled from school for more than 10 cumulative days.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- Comprehensive plan
- Child find documentation
- School district budget
- District records
- Enrollment information—SIMS
- Three Rivers Cooperative training
- Testing documentation
- Student referrals
- Teacher schedules
- Student file reviews
- Data tables C, E, K, and L
- Surveys
- Placement alternatives data
- Power school disciplines
- Personnel information

Meets requirements

The steering committee concluded that the school district comprehensive plan details the regulations concerning the provision of a free and appropriate public education to students with disabilities, and the district is providing a free and appropriate public education to all of their students with disabilities. The district also has procedures in place for students with disabilities that are suspended or expelled.

Validation Results

Meets requirements

The review team agrees with all other areas that were identified by the steering committee as meeting requirements in the principle of free and appropriate public education.

Principle 3 – Appropriate Evaluation

A comprehensive evaluation is conducted by a team of knowledgeable staff, which also includes parental input. A valid and reliable evaluation will result in effective individualized education programs for eligible students. The specific areas addressed in principle three are written notice and consent for evaluation, evaluation procedures and instruments, eligibility determination, reevaluation and continuing eligibility.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- Comprehensive plan
- General curriculum information
- Surveys
- Needs assessment information
- Student file reviews

- Personnel information
- Tables F, G, H, I, J, L and M
- Exit and reentry data into special education

Meets requirements

The steering committee concluded that the district does and excellent job of evaluation/reevaluation. Staff uses a variety of testing materials, evaluations and outside resources in order to obtain the best picture possible of each individual child's strengths and weaknesses. Evaluation timelines are all met.

Validation Results

Meets requirements

The review team found that the district consistently implemented the requirements for evaluations, conducted by a team of knowledgeable staff. The district completes valid and reliable evaluations, resulting in effective IEPs for eligible students. The district consistently uses state eligibility guidelines and assesses students in all areas of suspected disability. The district also provides appropriate written notice and obtains informed consent before assessments are administered to a child as part of evaluation or reevaluation. Evaluation/reevaluation procedures and instruments were found to meet minimum requirements.

Needs improvement

Although the Kadoka School District steering committee identified comprehensive evaluation procedures as an area meeting requirements, the review team identified evaluation/reevaluation procedures, specifically functional assessment, to be an area needing improvement for the Kadoka School District.

The review team determined that many of the district staff complete a variety of functional evaluation skills assessments. However, staff did not understand this functional information is to be summarized in an evaluation report, and then used to develop the student's present levels of performance statement. The functional information in the student's present levels of performance statement is the baseline information used for developing measurable annual goals and short term instructional objectives. Of the 11 files reviewed, 8 of the student files contained evidence of functional assessment, all 11 of the student files were missing the summaries of the functional assessments completed, and 6 of the student files were missing the functional information the student's present levels of performance statement.

The review team found the following areas out of compliance in the process of validating the district's self-assessment:

Out of compliance

24:05:25:04.02 Determination of needed evaluation data

24:05:25:04.03. Determination of eligibility.

Parental input in the evaluation process

Districts are required to ensure that a variety of assessment tools and strategies are used to gather relevant functional and development information about the child, including information provided by the parent. The review team finds the district has not ensured parental input into the evaluation process. No evidence of parental input was documented in any of the student files reviewed. In interview with district staff, they report contacting parents; however, no documentation of this opportunity for parental input occurs.

Copy of evaluation report given to parents

A copy of the evaluation report and documentation of determination of eligibility must be given to the parents. Of the 11 student files reviewed, documentation that the parents received a copy of the evaluation report was missing in 8 files.

Principle 4 – Procedural Safeguards
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Parents of children with disabilities have certain rights available. The school makes parents aware of these rights and makes sure they are understood. The specific areas addressed in principle four are adult student/transfer of rights, content of rights, consent, written notice, confidentiality and access to records, independent educational evaluation (IEE), complaint procedures, and due process hearings.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- Student file reviews
- Parent rights
- Comprehensive plan
- Inservice training records
- Student file access documents
- Tables L and M

Promising practice

The steering committee concluded as a promising practice that the school district to date has not had any complaints filed with the state or gone through any due process hearings.

Meets requirements

The steering committee identified the following as meeting requirements for the Kadoka School District. The adult/student transfer of rights has been completed on IEPs that were reviewed and the resulting IEPs document that the transfer of rights was completed at the age of 17. The consent forms for written prior notice details when parents are to receive their parental rights. When the parent initials the cover page of the IEP, they are documenting the receipt of their rights. The parents are informed of their right to an independent educational evaluation at public expense when they are given their parental rights during the meeting when evaluation results are reviewed.

Needs improvement

The steering committee noted that the comprehensive plan details the parents' right to access their child's special education files. The parents are notified of this right when they are given the parental rights. The steering committee concluded that the district needs to improve on showing how they have addressed this right more clearly with parents rather than just giving a copy of the parental rights.

Validation Results**Meets requirements**

While the steering committee concluded as a promising practice that the school district to date has not had any complaints filed with the state or gone through any due process hearings, this can reasonably be seen as the result of consistent implementation of administrative rules of South Dakota. This is a requirement, therefore, the monitoring team was unable to validate this as innovative, high-quality programming and instructional practices; however, they were able to validate this as meeting requirements for the district.

While the steering committee concluded as an area of needed improvement that the district needs to improve on showing how they have clearly explained parental rights to access their child's special education files, the review team found that the district is meeting requirements with the use of the parental rights pamphlet. The review team agrees with all other areas that were identified by the steering committee as meeting requirements in the principle of procedural safeguards.

Needs improvement

The review team found that the parental prior notices that were written with the Excent software program were missing an explanation of the course of action proposed by the district and the options considered. Of 11 files reviewed by the team, 3 of the student files contained parental prior notices that were not completed with required content. This is an area of needed improvement for the Kadoka School District. The review team also noted that students from age 14 and above were not consistently invited to his or her IEP meetings.

Principle 5 – Individualized Education Program

The Individualized Education Program (IEP) is a written document for a child with a disability that is developed, reviewed and revised by the IEP team, which includes the parent. The specific areas addressed in principle five are IEP team, IEP content, transition components for secondary IEPs, annual reviews, transition from early intervention program, and IEP related issues.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- Comprehensive plan
- Student file reviews
- Personnel information
- Surveys
- Student progress data
- Table N
- Personnel training records
- Budget information

Meets requirements

The steering committee identified the following as meeting requirements for the Kadoka School District. The district ensures that the IEP team is comprised of the appropriate team membership and meets identified responsibilities. There are policies and procedures in place per the comprehensive plan and verified through file reviews to support this fact. The district is also maintaining that the proper content be written within the IEP, upheld by following the comprehensive plan and verified through file reviews. The district does have in place the proper procedures and policies to insure that an appropriate IEP is developed and in effect for each eligible student. Although the district is maintaining proper practice as to the individualized education program there is always room for improvement.

Needs improvement

The district needs to improve on allowing adequate time for teachers to communicate with other staff members in order to provide the best educational setting for students. The district needs to improve in the documentation of how input is obtained from classroom teachers not in attendance at the IEP meeting and documentation of the quarterly reporting process to parents. Also, the district needs to develop a written document to aid in the transition for a student from Part C to Part B to insure the smooth transition possible.

Validation Results

Meets requirements

The review team determined that the district ensures the IEP team is comprised of the appropriate team membership. The district also ensures that an IEP is developed and in effect for each eligible student.

Needs improvement

The review team agrees with all other areas that were identified by the steering committee as needing improvement in the principle of individualized education program.

Out of compliance

24:05:27:01.03. Content of individualized education program.

Although the Kadoka School District steering committee identified content of IEP as an area meeting requirements, the review team identified content of IEP, specifically present levels of educational performance, accommodations/modifications to be provided to the student, and transition to be out of compliance for the Kadoka School District.

Present levels of educational performance

A student's present levels of educational performance statement must include the student's strengths, weaknesses, areas/skills to be addressed, information from evaluations, parental input, observations, and how the disability affects the child's involvement and progress in the general curriculum. In eight student IEPs reviewed, the effect of the student's disability on the student's involvement in the general curriculum was not reflected in the IEP. Four of the statements reviewed did not include parental input, and a student's present levels of performance in the area of transition was missing for all secondary IEPs reviewed. In addition, since the district is not consistently summarizing the functional assessments completed for students, the present levels of performance statements do not always reflect skill-based data.

Accommodations/Modifications

The amount of services to be provided must be stated in the IEP, so that the level of the district's commitment of resources will be clear to parents and other IEP team members. During file reviews, the team found that "as needed" was used to describe the frequency of accommodations/modifications needed four of the IEPs reviewed. The location of the needed modification was also not consistently described within the IEPs.

Transition

Transition services must be a coordinated set of activities for a student, designed within an outcome-oriented process, which promotes movement from school to postschool activities. These services could include postsecondary education, vocational training, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, and/or community participation. The coordinated set of activities must be based on the individual student's needs and consider the student's preferences and interests.

The monitoring team found the Kadoka School District did not ensure that IEPs of students addressed transition as a coordinated set of activities with a goal-oriented approach. Through review of all IEPs and student files at the transition level, the review team found that courses and activities were not related to the overall goal, and the goals and transition plans were generic and did not address individual future outcomes, but focused primarily on passing courses and graduating. Through interview with district staff, the team became aware that staff is unclear how to integrate transition planning and the planning of coursework for students at the high school level.

Every student on an IEP that is 14 years of age and older must also has a statement of transition service needs that focuses on the student's course of study. Of the files reviewed in which transition is a required component, the course of study pages within the IEP were incomplete and nonspecific, and listed some required courses, then "electives".

Principle 6 – Least Restrictive Environment

After the IEP is developed or reviewed, the IEP team must decide where the IEP services are to be provided. Consideration begins in the general education classroom for school age students. The specific areas addressed in principle six are placement decisions, consent for initial placement, least restrictive environment procedures, preschool children, and LRE related issues.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- Student file reviews
- Budget information
- Comprehensive plan
- Tables E, F, I, J, and L
- Personnel training records
- Teacher schedules

Meets requirements

The steering committee identified the following as meeting requirements for the Kadoka School District. The school district has all preschool students from the district attend. Kadoka has a district wide preschool at no cost to parents. This is not based on need, but all students within the district that who are age-appropriate are invited to attend. The staff has many modification options and help for individual students available to them. Behavior plans are designed and implemented district-wide for students with behavior or emotional problems.

The steering committee also noted that students with severe disabilities may not be integrated into the classroom as much at the secondary level as their academic abilities become much lower than the peers at that age. The district needs more information and data on this to come to a better conclusion.

Needs improvement

The steering committee concluded through file reviews that the staff is not always documenting the consideration of potential harmful effects of the proposed placement. Some staff was found to be using an old IEP form that did not include the reminder for this content requirement.

Validation Results

Promising practice

Although the steering committee identified the district preschool as meeting requirements for the district, the review team concluded that the preschool program within the Kadoka School District is a promising practice. Since the school district has all preschool students from the district attend, the preschool is not only a needed service for the community, but it naturally becomes an integrated preschool for any preschool students with disabilities.

